

Senator Jack Scott

21st District Legislative Update

February 2006



SENATOR SCOTT PREVIEWS ELDER ABUSE LEGISLATION

One of our most serious problems in society is the financial abuse of senior citizens. Perpetrators specifically target the elderly in an effort to rob them of their life savings, often leaving the senior without any means of financial support.

Throughout my legislative career, I have introduced legislation to curb senior financial abuse. The recent Los Angeles Times series "Guardians for Profit" illuminated additional issues and problems that need attention. These articles revealed the shortcomings of our conservatorship system. Sadly, these shortcomings, including lack of oversight and resources, have led to elder abuse, ranging from neglect to outright fraud.

My legislation, Senate Bill (SB) 1116, seeks to remedy some of the problems in the conservatorship system, particularly those related to the sale of real property.

Specifically, SB 1116 would require a conservator to submit to the court:

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Senator Scott with Astronaut Sally Ride at Jet Propulsion Laboratory

SENATOR SCOTT CHAIRS MATH/SCIENCE HEARING AT JPL

"Strengthening Student Achievement in Math and Science"

LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE – Math and science education took center stage recently at a legislative hearing at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in La Cañada Flintridge.

State Senator Jack Scott (D-Pasadena) joined with educators, fellow legislator Assemblymember Carol Liu, JPL scientists and NASA astronaut Sally Ride to talk about ways to improve math and science curriculum in the public schools.

Senator Scott, who chairs the Senate Education Committee, called on educators to look at creative ways to get more teachers into math and science, especially in low-performing schools.

"Some of the ways we'll be looking to do that is by

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- prior to the sale of a conservatee's real property, at least two market evaluations of the property, prepared by a licensed realtor;
- upon completion of the sale, written confirmation of the actual sales price and any commissions paid and to whom those commissions were paid; and
- written documentation of the alternatives that were considered, such as in-home supportive services, prior to the sale of the residence

Another type of abuse highlighted in the Los Angeles Times' series deals with asset mismanagement. In one example, a conservator took her ill 97-year-old client's money out of savings and purchased a five-year annuity. The annuity would have been profitable only if the client had lived to at least 103. Sadly, she died within a few months.

I've received similar complaints in my office. That's why I will continue to pursue my legislation introduced last year, SB 192, which requires insurers to develop suitability standards for the sale of annuities to seniors. For example, it requires insurers to consider such things as the applicant's age, and whether the senior has other funds sufficient to finance health care needs or

long-term care expenses. It also requires insurers to reject an application if it does not meet its suitability standards.

I am also a joint author on Senator Figueroa's bill to require professional conservators to be licensed through the Department of Consumer Affairs.

(Reprinted with permission from Senior Living Magazine, February 2006)

NUISANCE LIQUOR STORES

Cracking down on nuisance liquor stores was the topic of a legislative hearing held last December in Pasadena. During the hearing, Senator Scott discussed his legislation - SB 148 --that would give cities more leverage in enforcing city codes while requiring liquor stores to conform to city zoning laws. The City of Pasadena requested the legislation because of problems in regulating some off-site liquor stores.

Under current law, cities or counties can only enforce zoning ordinances that were in effect when the liquor license was issued. The proposed new legislation would enable cities to implement new ordinances and also allow liquor store owners a reasonable time to comply with the changes.

Scott's bill - SB 148 - will be taken up again this legislative session. You can track this bill and other legislation by going to the senate website: www.sen.ca.gov.

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Hearings – Cont.

helping mid-career workers to learn how to teach,” stated Senator Scott. “Another idea is for school districts to give credit to teachers in shortage areas; for example, an engineer from JPL should get credit for those years of experience in the field.”

Senator Scott went on to stress the importance of knowledge and innovation as keys to maintaining our economic power.

Senate Ed. Committee Hearing on Teacher Shortage and Quality

Senator Scott heard more on the challenge of attracting and retaining top-notch teachers in many of California's low performing schools during another Senate Education Committee hearing later in January. He pointed out that the percentage of poorly trained teachers has been cut in half, but that more than 20,000 teachers are still in training or working on emergency permits.

In the Democrats' weekly radio address, Senator Scott was asked to explain in more detail his plans for addressing the looming teacher crisis in California:

“The Super Bowl is history, but the hype is still going strong. One thing the National Football League has done to maintain competitiveness among the various teams is making sure that the lowest performing team gets the first draft pick the next time around. That's a system I'd like to see copied in California schools, where too often the best teachers aren't matched with the students who need them most.

“Studies show the lowest performing schools have the



teachers least prepared to help our children. One out of every 5 teachers in these schools is under prepared – double the number in our high achieving schools. Students in schools with large numbers of minority students are 3 times as likely to be taught by an under prepared teacher. For math and science classes, the number increases to 4 times. Over the years we've cracked down and dropped the number of under prepared teachers in California from a high of 14% of the total teacher workforce to about 7%. But even 7% is too high.

“California is also facing a crisis in the overall number of teachers we have. In the next ten years we'll need to replace more than 100,000 teachers, primarily due to retirement. As Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, and as someone who has worked in education for 30 years, I am committed to making sure California meets these challenges.

“This past week the Senate Education Committee heard from some of the front line experts about what it will take to make sure we have a qualified teacher in every California classroom. To address this teaching crisis, I have introduced SB1209, which will take the best of those recommendations so we can get moving before the first wave of retirements hits and before the achievement gap between high performing and low performing schools gets even worse.

“Teams in the Rose Bowl and the Super Bowl all have a level field to play on.

“That's what we want for California's school kids, too.”

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